

## THE ARMY'S OPERATIONAL RESERVE FORCE

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE ARMY'S OPERATIONAL RESERVE FORCE**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The reserve components of today's United States Army are, by both necessity and design, part of the operational force. Based on the anticipated strategic environment the Army has made a conscious decision to institutionalize the operational reserve force, an operational role which the reserve components will have to execute for the foreseeable future. To complete the "explicit evolution" of the Army's reserve components to an operational force, implications must be examined and addressed within the context of progressive readiness and cyclic deployments. The evolution toward an operational reserve force began in 1973 with the Total Force Policy. However, the implications of this change were not initially recognized. A critical capability gap resulted from a mismatch between decisions that increased operational reliance on the reserve components and the policy and resourcing decisions during the last quarter of the twentieth century. This paper will explain why an operational reserve force is being considered, examine the practical differences between a strategic reserve and an operational reserve, and identify critical implications of transitioning the Army's reserve components into a feasible, sustainable, operational reserve force.





## THE ARMY'S OPERATIONAL RESERVE FORCE

At the core of the needed changes is the explicit evolution of the reserve components from a purely strategic force . . . to an operational force . . .

—Commission on the National Guard and Reserves,  
January 31, 2008<sup>1</sup>

The reserve components of today's United States Army are, by both necessity and design, part of the operational force. Based on the anticipated strategic environment the Army has made a conscious decision to institutionalize the operational reserve force, an operational role which the reserve components will have to execute for the foreseeable future. To complete the "explicit evolution" of the Army's reserve components to an operational force, implications must be examined and addressed within the context of progressive readiness and cyclic deployments.

The evolution of our Nation's military reserve components did not begin on January 31, 2008, with the Commission's final report to Congress, or even September 11, 2001, with terrorist attacks on the United States. Roles and missions of the various elements of American military forces have evolved almost constantly since the first Europeans arrived in North America. The role of the part-time military force has undergone many changes in American history. In the early colonial period, the militia was the primary source of local and colonial defense. Following a successful war for independence the young United States of America continued to rely heavily on state militia for national defense. A strong sense of state identity and mistrust of federal power, global geographic separation, the high cost of full-time Soldiers, and a tendency toward isolationism all delayed development of a large standing army. As national power and national interests grew so did the need for full-time, professional military

forces. At the end of the nineteenth century the United States had adopted an approach to national defense that relied on a small active military reinforced by reservists and draftees in times of war.<sup>2</sup> By mid-twentieth century, superpower status and a grand strategy of nuclear deterrence and Soviet containment required a large standing army, made possible by perpetual conscription and reinforced by a strategic reserve.<sup>3</sup>

The part-time military force evolved from an operational role, in the seventeenth century, to a strategic role designed to facilitate rapid expansion of the full-time military institution by the mid-twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> This “new” role came with an operational assumption that, if the reserves were needed, there would be sufficient time to fill shortfalls in manning, training, and equipment after mobilization, but before deployment. The Army’s reserve components, National Guard and Army Reserve, were structured and resourced accordingly in the early years of the Cold War. However, the Total Force Policy and the All-Volunteer Force increased operational reliance on the reserves following the Vietnam War.<sup>5</sup> Army force structure changes placed much of the combat support and combat service support structure required to sustain military operations into the reserve components. By moving support structure into the reserves, the Army preserved combat structure in the active component even as the Army’s budget and authorized end strength were reduced in the 1970s.<sup>6</sup> The result required a substantial reserve force mobilization to sustain protracted war; the Army would no longer be capable of going to war without the Reserves and, by extension, the Country.

However, the increased operational role for the reserve force was not obvious in the last quarter of the twentieth century. One characteristic of the “American Way of

War” described by Dr. Colin S. Gray is a predisposition for infrequent, short, decisive warfare.<sup>7</sup> This unique American characteristic, when combined with a prevailing “never again” culture served to mask a critical operational capability gap.<sup>8</sup> The gap resulted from a mismatch between force structure and conscription decisions that increased operational reliance on the reserve components and the continued strategic reserve-based policy and resourcing decisions during the last quarter of the twentieth century.<sup>9</sup>

The current debate is not really about whether to increase operational reliance on the reserve forces of the U.S. Army for national defense. That decision was made in 1973 with the Total Force Policy and the end of the Draft.<sup>10</sup> Neither is it about the acceptability of operational reliance on part-time Soldiers; America has a long history of such reliance. Current debate involves the feasibility of that reliance in today’s strategic environment – in an expeditionary Army continuously generating forces to source requirements in an era of persistent conflict.<sup>11</sup> This paper will explain why an operational reserve force is being considered, examine the practical differences between a strategic reserve and an operational reserve, and identify critical manning, training, equipping, and utilization implications of transitioning the Army’s reserve components into a feasible, sustainable, operational reserve force.

### Why an Operational Reserve Force

Public Law 108-375, the Ronald Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005, established the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves to assess the roles, missions, and capabilities of the National Guard and Reserves and to recommend changes needed to best meet national security needs of the current strategic environment.<sup>12</sup> The third and final report from this Commission was submitted to Congress on January 31, 2008; it assesses the necessity of and the means required

to create a sustainable operational reserve force. The Commission does not assume from the outset that an operational reserve, with current utilization practices, is the best national security solution.

The issues that must be addressed are whether the reserve components should continue to play the significant role they have assumed in operations, foreign and domestic; whether they should also retain a strategic role; and what changes are necessary to ensure both that they succeed in their missions and that our national security is protected.<sup>13</sup>

The 2008 report to Congress indicates that the Commission came to the conclusion that for the foreseeable future, there is no reasonable alternative to the continuing increased reliance on reserve components as part of an operational force.<sup>14</sup> The intent of this paper is not to summarize or restate the Commission's work. However, the January 31, 2008, report will be referenced extensively as it is the foundational document for the ongoing operational reserve force effort.

Since the Commission concluded that there is no reasonable alternative to an operational reserve force it will be useful to consider the possible alternatives evaluated and why they were rejected. The first alternative considered was a significant expansion of active component forces.<sup>15</sup> Inherent in this alternative would be a significant growth in active component combat support and combat service support structure to reduce Total Force Policy related logistical dependence on reserve forces. However, rebalancing support structure would not be sufficient, as a significant number of combat units from the Army National Guard are needed to meet operational requirements. Mobilization demand on National Guard and Army Reserve forces in 2010 is approximately 111,000 Soldiers.<sup>16</sup> Sustained mobilization demand for reserve Soldiers to meet operational demand through 2015 is estimated to be 60,000 Soldiers.<sup>17</sup> Even at the current BOG-to-dwell ratio of 1:1, the active component of the Army would

need to be increased by 120,000 to eliminate projected operational dependence on reserve forces.<sup>18</sup> Active growth of 240,000 would be needed at the optimal BOG-to-dwell ratio of 1:3.<sup>19</sup> Drawbacks to this alternative include cost, lack of dispersion, and reduced contact between the Army and the population it serves. The connection between an All-Volunteer Army and the citizenry it serves has been a point of debate and concern dating back to the deliberation on ending the Draft in the late 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>20</sup> Reserve Soldiers cost about one fourth as much as active Soldiers and they are dispersed into local communities across the nation.<sup>21</sup> This dispersion presents a challenge for collective training but an advantage in responding to threats to the homeland and in providing military support to civil authorities. Dispersion also helps sustain the bond between the All-Volunteer Force and the American public.<sup>22</sup>

A return to the Draft was the second alternative considered. Since Draftees would serve on active duty, thus expanding the size of the active components, this is actually a variation on the first alternative. However, in theory a return to the Draft would strengthen the bond between the military and society because Draftees would be pulled from, and returned to, a broad cross-section of America. Further, because military service would be compulsory, the recruiting, retention, and payroll costs of active component expansion should be significantly reduced. This alternative was rejected by the Commission as not politically viable.<sup>23</sup> The conclusion is supported by a 2006 RAND study of the All-Volunteer force which finds that American tradition does not support a long-standing Draft.<sup>24</sup>

The final alternative to an operational reserve considered and rejected by the Commission is implicit. Returning the reserve components to a strategic reserve role

and relying solely on the active components as the operational force, without expansion, is not explicitly stated as an alternative. However, this alternative must be considered and rejected before one can conclude that an operational reserve force is required. The question that one must answer is whether or not there is a reasonable expectation that the operational requirement for forces can be reduced within the force planning horizon. Global trends in technology, population, and demand for resources are expected to drive a dynamic strategic environment characterized by persistent conflict over the next several decades.<sup>25</sup> This environment will require a sustainable, adaptable operational force with strategic depth, surge capacity, and an ability to conduct actions ranging from pre-hostilities security cooperation, to counterinsurgency, to major combat operations. The expected depth and breadth of ground force requirements in the coming decades and the need to achieve a sustainable rotation ratio for active forces suggest that sufficient demand reduction is unlikely.<sup>26</sup> Since demand for operational forces cannot be sufficiently reduced and the active component cannot be sufficiently expanded, the reserve components' contribution to operations at home and abroad will be enduring.<sup>27</sup>

#### Practical Difference Between Strategic Reserve and Operational Reserve Force

Although in many respects the reserve components of the United States Army are being used operationally today, it does not mean they are already a sustainable operational force.<sup>28</sup> An understanding of the practical differences between strategic reserve and operational reserve force is critical in examining the manning, training, equipping, and utilization implications of transitioning from one to the other. As stated earlier in this paper, from an Army structure point of view, the Nation became operationally dependent on the reserve components of the Army in 1973 when the Draft was ended and many of the key enablers for sustaining combat operations were moved

out of the active component and placed into the reserve components as part of the Total Force Policy. Further, since “Homeland Defense and Defense Support to Civil Authorities are total force missions,” and the reserve components are often the Defense Department’s first responders in providing military support to domestic civil authorities, they have always had an operational role, even in peacetime.<sup>29</sup> However, from mobilization policy, Army culture, and defense resourcing perspectives the reserve components remained in the strategic reserve role assumed during the Cold War through the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism. The question then becomes, “What are the implications of transitioning from a strategic reserve to a sustainable operational reserve force?” To answer this question it is first necessary to examine the concepts of strategic reserve and operational reserve force.

The American grand strategy that evolved during the early years of the Cold War recognized that a nuclear arsenal alone was not an effective deterrent to Soviet expansion or other less-than-existential threats to national interests. Large, capable, expandable conventional forces were needed to contain the spread of communism and to provide a proportionate military response short of destroying the enemy’s major cities and industrial capacity with thermonuclear weapons.<sup>30</sup> American strategic assumptions about conventional warfare in the nuclear age seem to have allowed for two possibilities: full mobilization for direct combat with the Soviet Union and indirect, small, limited duration engagements to inhibit Soviet expansion or respond to non-peer state actors. Reserve forces would not be needed to fight the limited engagements. In the less likely event of a large conventional war with the Soviet Union, full-time American

and NATO forces would fight the opening rounds, reserve forces would provide initial reinforcement, followed by expanded conscription.<sup>31</sup>

Prudent risk was taken in reserve readiness based on Cold War strategy of nuclear deterrence and Soviet containment and the underlying assumptions about how reserve forces would be used in conventional warfare. Accepting risk in reserve component readiness was necessary because funding is required to achieve manning, training, and equipment readiness. But funding, even for national security, is finite. As a result, Army readiness resourcing is tiered, or prioritized, based on the likely order of use for combat. This tiered readiness was never stratified in just two layers: active and reserve. Resourcing priorities were established within each component based on which units were most critical to mission success. High priority reserve units were aligned with specific contingency plans and, therefore, assumed less risk in personnel and equipment readiness than lower priority reserve units but all were expected to require substantial post-mobilization training prior to deployment.

As a strategic reserve, prior to the cyclic deployments associated with today's operational reserve force, tiered readiness in the reserve components was relatively static.<sup>32</sup> This Cold War relic for force generation required some reserve units to sustain a perpetually elevated level of readiness at the expense of lower priority reserve units. High priority units were authorized to offer accession and retention bonuses and allowed to overfill personnel authorizations to increase personnel readiness. They were often the only reserve units to be fielded new equipment and their equipment received priority for repair parts and maintenance. High priority units received additional funding to conduct collective training and were required to conduct rotations to the National



Training Center. Conversely, low priority units were generally not authorized bonuses, were often authorized fewer personnel than required by organization manning documents, received cascaded equipment only when new equipment was fielded to other units, and received training funds sufficient to train, at most, squad level collective tasks.

Despite the readiness stratification within the strategic reserve there are four general characteristics that may help distinguish it from an operational reserve force. First, as stated above, readiness was tiered and relatively static. Reserve units required for specific contingency plans were identified by name and resourced to sustain elevated levels of readiness. Second, mobilizations and deployments were rare regardless of unit priority. This was partly due to the limited nature of U.S. conflicts in the last quarter of the twentieth century and partly due to the nature of a strategic reserve. If a force is truly held in strategic reserve, then committing that force incurs an element of future challenges risk to the Army's capacity to execute future missions and to hedge against strategic shocks.<sup>33</sup> Third, reserve utilization assumed a mobilize-train-deploy construct. When mobilized, units would have time to fill personnel and equipment shortfalls and conduct collective level training prior to deployment. Because large scale mobilizations were rare and reservists could be mobilized for up to two consecutive years, there was no imperative to get reserve units through the mobilization station as fast as possible. While almost all individual training and some collective training was conducted prior to mobilization, reserve units maintained an extensive post-mobilization training plan to be completed at the mobilization station. Fourth, despite the Army's best efforts there was little predictability about which units would be

mobilized for how long or for what type of contingency. High priority units were high priority because they were aligned with Combatant Commander contingency plans. To limit operational risk to existing contingency plans, it was often the lower priority, under-resourced units that were mobilized and deployed when needs arose that didn't involve executing an existing contingency plan.<sup>34</sup> A case-in-point involves the use of Army National Guard (ARNG) Divisions for Bosnia-Herzegovina Stabilization Force (SFOR) operations in 2000-2002. In 1994, fifteen ARNG separate combat brigades were aligned to contingency plans and resourced for enhanced readiness. ARNG Divisions were not aligned to existing contingency plans and were considered low priority for resourcing and unlikely to be deployed outside the Continental United States (CONUS). However, to relieve stress on active component forces, the 49th Armored Division (Texas) assumed command of SFOR from 10th Mountain Division in 2000. The 49th Armored Division was followed by the 29th Infantry Division (Virginia) in 2001 and the 28th Infantry Division (Pennsylvania) in 2002. These units completed successful mobilizations and deployments and are not provided to illustrate operational risk of unready forces. Rather, they illustrate the challenge of accurately predicting what forces will be needed for operational deployment in an uncertain future. Tiered readiness was an acceptable approach when the demand for operational forces allowed for rare deployments. However, a strategic environment that requires cyclic deployments also requires progressive readiness in the operational force.<sup>35</sup>

Recent mobilization policy and force management changes are relevant to the operational reserve force discussion. On January 19, 2007, the Secretary of Defense changed mobilization policy to permit an unlimited number of involuntary mobilizations,



ARFORGEN.<sup>40</sup> This progressive readiness not only provides ready forces to be sourced-out during the Available year but also provides strategic depth and surge capacity by sustaining improved readiness and experience across the entire reserve force. Members of a sustainable operational reserve force, their families, and their employers expect repeated deployments. They understand that the early years of the ARFORGEN cycle are for individual training and professional military education while later years of the cycle are dedicated to unit collective training. Limiting mobilizations to 12 consecutive months requires a train-mobilize-deploy construct to reduce time spent at the mobilization station in order to maximize time deployed (BOG) for each mobilization.

#### Implications of an Operational Reserve

The characteristics of, and expectations for, an operational reserve force examined above lead to an examination of implications. Some implications, like more pre-mobilization training time, updated mobilization concepts, and interoperable equipment and formations, are obvious from the distinctions already drawn between a strategic reserve and an operational reserve force. However, this section will consider these and other, less obvious, implications within four common areas of trepidation concerning the reserve force: manning, training, equipping, and utilization. Annex I of the Army Campaign Plan is the Army's implementation plan to transition the reserve components into an operational force.<sup>41</sup> This implementation plan identifies "six essential tasks" vital to ensuring an operational reserve force: adapt pre-mobilization and post-mobilization training cycles, adapt service incentives, develop equipping strategies, achieve Continuum of Service (COS), adjust and integrate policies and statutes, and adapt the generating force. For the most part, however, these "tasks"

remain rather nebulous efforts assigned to various Army commands and organizations for further development. The Army Organization Life Cycle Model (AOLCM), depicted in Figure 2, “provides a conceptual framework to analyze Army change efforts” and will be used, here, to examine manning, training, equipping, and utilization implications of

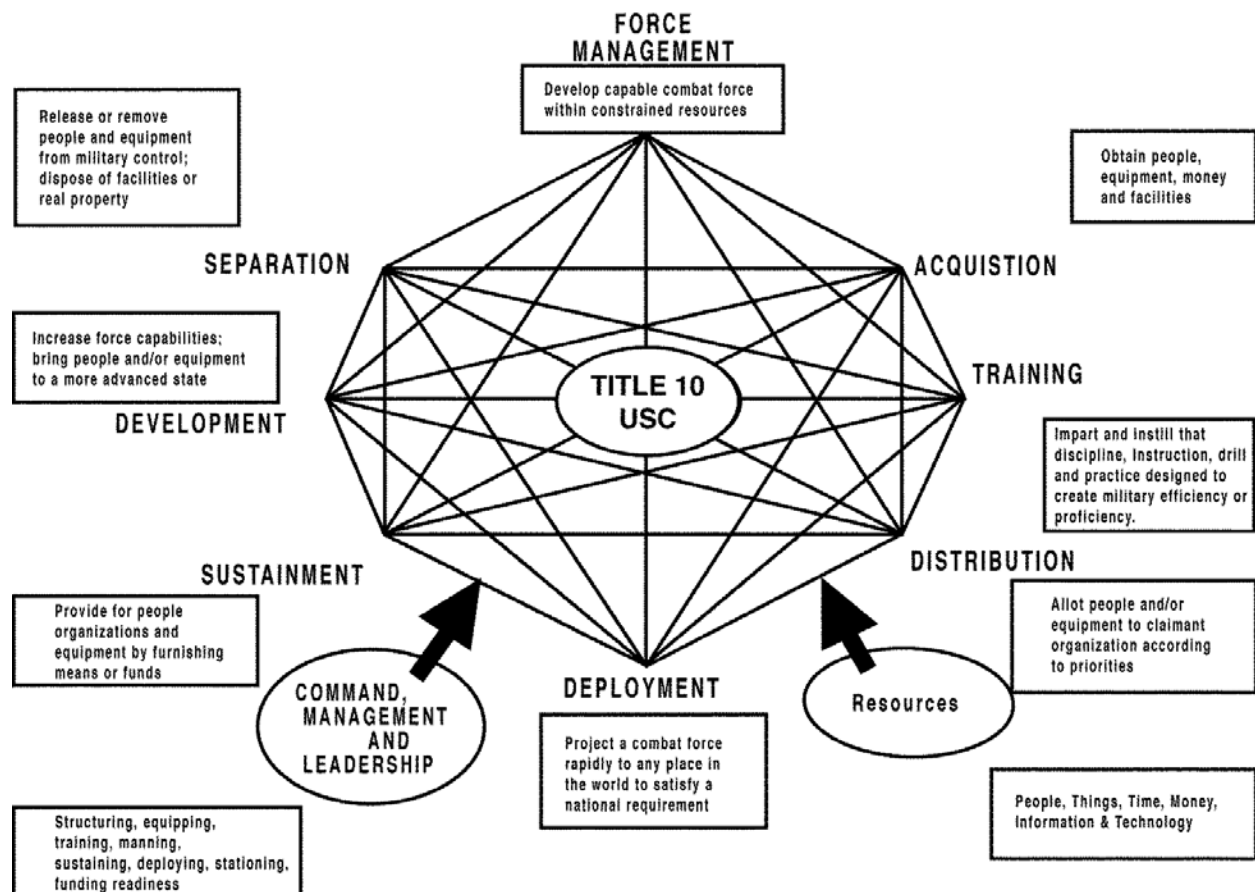


Figure 2. The Army Organization Life Cycle Model<sup>42</sup>

the explicit evolution to a sustainable operational reserve force enduring cyclical deployments.<sup>43</sup>

The AOLCM “reflects the stages that organizations and their personnel and equipment will experience at one time or another during their service in the Army.”<sup>44</sup> Life cycle functions included in the AOLCM are: Force Management, Acquisition, Training,

Distribution, Deployment, Sustainment, Development, and Separation.<sup>45</sup> Force Management is the development of “capable combat forces within constrained resources” and is “the key activity underlying all other functions” of the model. Acquisition refers to acquiring the “people, equipment, money and facilities necessary to accomplish specified missions.” Training “imparts and instills that discipline, instruction, drill and practice designed to create military proficiency.” For the purposes of the AOLCM the scope is limited to training required to turn a “civilian into a Soldier” and training required by a Soldier to operate a new piece of equipment. Distribution “allots people and/or equipment to the organization according to priorities.” Deployment “projects a combat force rapidly to any place in the world to satisfy a national requirement.” Sustainment “provides for people, organizations and equipment by furnishing means or funds.” Development “increases force capabilities by bringing people and/or equipment to a more advanced state.” Separation “releases or removes people and equipment from military control.” The interconnecting lines of the model illustrate how change in one functional stage may have implications in the other functional stages. Resources are an external influence on the AOLCM critical to implication examination.

Since the transition from a strategic reserve “results in the development of a capable operational force” and is the action underlying the implications considered, the operational reserve force effort is represented by the Force Management stage.<sup>46</sup> The examination of implications is grouped into the manning, training, equipping, and utilization areas and followed across life cycle functions as appropriate.

Personnel readiness is an essential component of the sustainable operational reserve force and a ready force begins with the individual Soldier. The amount of cross-leveling currently required in the Army's reserve components is not sustainable.<sup>47</sup> There are three critical manning implications that must be addressed. First, the operational reserve force must maintain authorized end strengths. Current authorized personnel strengths are 358,200 in the Army National Guard and 206,000 in the Army Reserve.<sup>48</sup> Nothing else in the AOLCM can happen until the individual is acquired; vacant billets cannot be trained or equipped. A unit with a robust collective training program that has 100% percent of its authorized equipment and 100% of its assigned personnel duty qualified, but is only assigned 75% of authorized personnel is still only 75%. Both reserve components achieved their authorized end strengths in 2009. However, maintaining end strength in an All-Volunteer force over the long-term requires effective incentives. It also requires that a new set of expectations and relationships be established with families and employers. Part of this can be accomplished through support and outreach efforts. However, based on the heavy burden it places on employers, some form of benefit to the employer will likely be needed for long-term sustainment. This benefit could include a tax incentive to hire reservists or an employee benefit cost share arrangement.

The second manning implication is that authorized end strength must be sufficiently higher than the force structure requirements in each reserve component to create a holding account for non-deployable personnel. A strategic reserve legacy and the geographic nature of the reserve force continue to afflict the personnel readiness of units preparing for deployment. As a strategic reserve, aggregate force structure

requirements were greater than authorized end strength. This was done in order to “buy” more units than the end strength could pay for, knowing that personnel shortfalls could be filled prior to deployment. In addition to the personnel shortfalls inherent in this approach to force management, many assigned personnel were not deployable.

Untrained personnel represent the largest portion of the non-deployable pool because until an individual completes initial entry training he is not deployable outside the United States.<sup>49</sup> The assignment of untrained personnel to units is caused by the geographic nature of the reserve force and the resulting reversal of two stages in the AOLCM, Training and Distribution. Individuals assessed into the active component are recruited against the aggregate requirements of the entire force, trained, and then distributed to vacancies across the force. However, most individuals recruited into the reserve components are assessed into a local unit, and then sent to training. Assignment to a unit (Distribution) occurs prior to initial entry training. Personnel shortfalls and non-deployable personnel assigned to operational units require personnel cross-leveling from other units to support deployments.

This was not a problem for a strategic reserve when deployments were rare and training time at the mobilization station was abundant. However, for an operational reserve force, this inhibits the progressive readiness required for ARFORGEN in both the donor units and the recipient units. An analysis, by component, based on average numbers awaiting initial training and at initial training, as well as actual cross-leveling numbers in support of deployments should be completed as soon as possible to determine how much end strength-to-force structure deviation is needed to sufficiently reduce the need to cross-level personnel for deployments.



The final manning implication examined here is the need to stabilize personnel in units as they prepare and execute deployments. If a unit is in a sustained five-year ARFORGEN cycle, those Soldiers whose term of enlistment ends just prior to deployment, depart with almost four years of training toward deployment and must be replaced by someone who will have spent almost no time training with the unit prior to deployment. Incentives must be available to entice those trained Soldiers to stay in through the unit's deployment. It is neither cost effective nor desirable to pursue unit stability throughout the ARFORGEN cycle. However, an Alert Order issued approximately 12 months prior to projected mobilization date could be used to trigger the flow of resources needed to stabilize unit personnel from Alert through redeployment. Additionally, more flexibility is needed in setting the term of enlistment and reenlistment contracts in order to synchronize contracts with the ARFORGEN cycle and minimize the number of enlistments scheduled to expire during the last two years of each cycle.

While Soldiers are the building blocks of effective units, training is the mortar that holds them together and makes them effective. There are also three critical training implications of an operational reserve force. The most important implication is the need to conduct all training required to deploy a ready force while minimizing the amount of training required at the mobilization station (post-mobilization training). The 12 month mobilization clock starts on the day the unit, or individual, is mobilized; every day spent at the mobilization station is one less day of BOG available for that mobilization period. The effort to maximize BOG requires that training be mission focused and conducted prior to mobilization (pre-mobilization training) to the greatest extent possible. Unit

training will focus on the assigned Core Mission Essential Task List (C-METL) throughout the ARFORGEN cycle, until training can be focused on a specific mission set.<sup>50</sup>

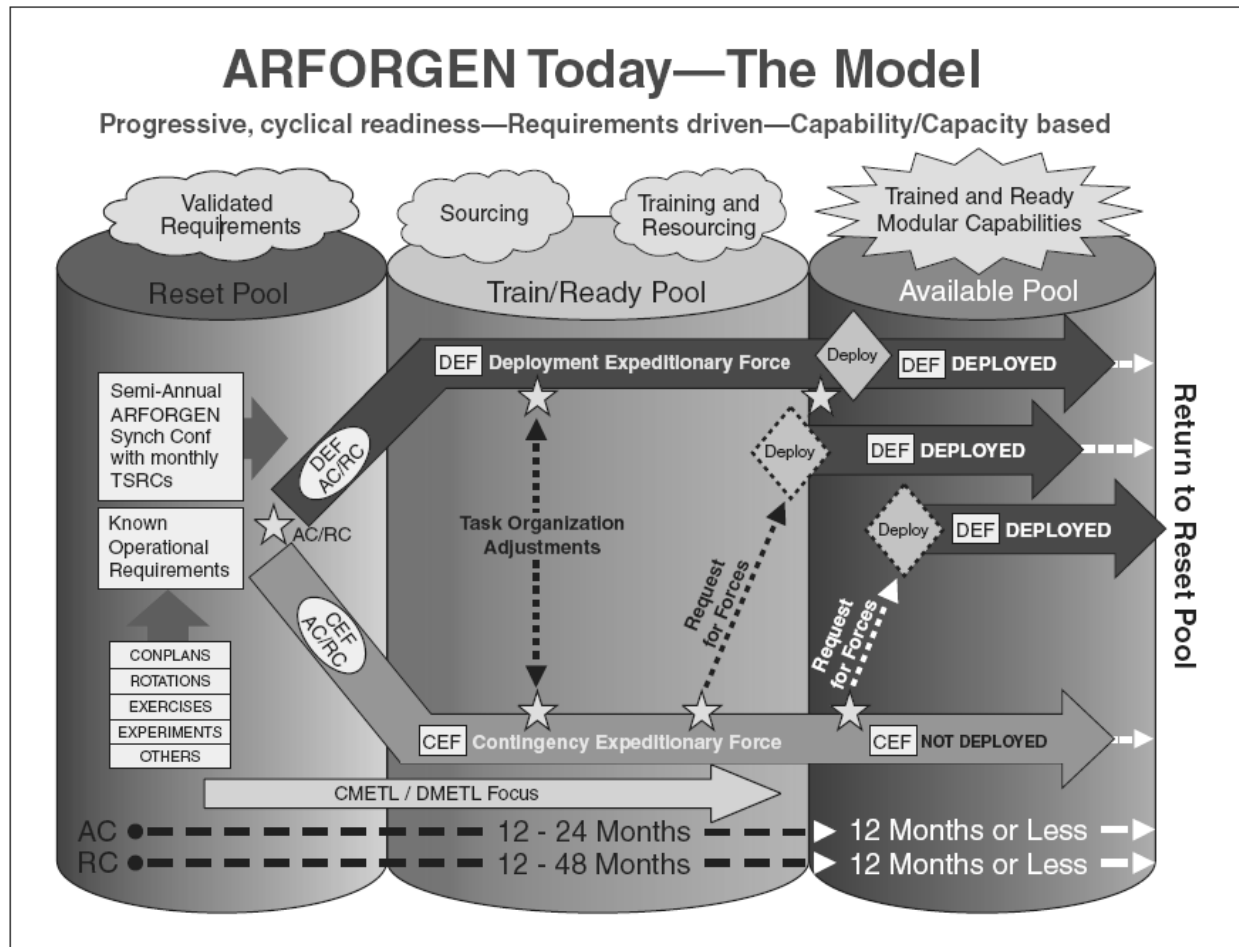


Figure 3. Expeditionary Force Progression through ARFORGEN<sup>51</sup>

Notification of Sourcing (NOS) provides the mission focus that allows unit commanders to develop a Directed Mission Essential Task List (D-METL) and supporting training plans to synchronize pre-mobilization and post-mobilization training.<sup>52</sup> NOS is needed 18 to 24 months prior to a projected mobilization date to provide sufficient pre-mobilization time to accomplish most of the required pre-deployment training and tasks prior to arriving at the mobilization station.<sup>53</sup> Units that

receive NOS for deployment are referred to as Deployment Expeditionary Forces (DEF); all other units in the cycle are Contingency Expeditionary Forces (CEF). Figure 3 illustrates the relationship of DEF and CEF units within the ARFOREN model. CEF units arrive in the Available force pool without specific mission focus and are available for sourcing against force requirements as they emerge. However, because CEF units cannot focus on a D-METL during pre-mobilization training, they may require more post-mobilization training time, depending on the mission.

The second training implication is an increased training certification role for reserve component higher headquarters.<sup>54</sup> Training certification is needed to ensure readiness is progressing toward established goals for units in the Train/Ready force pool. It also enables post-mobilization training time reduction. Certification of pre-mobilization training precludes these training events from having to be repeated post-mobilization simply for certification purposes. Pre-mobilization training certification by reserve component higher headquarters allows units and Army evaluators to focus on higher level collective training and certification during time constrained post-mobilization training periods.

The third training implication is the need for meticulous management of institutional training slots and, potentially, changes to course eligibility and promotion policies. Regardless of DEF/CEF status, units are stabilized and focused on collective events, either operations or training, during the last year of the ARFORGEN cycle while in the Available force pool. Collective training is the focus during the last two years in the Train/Ready force pool. Therefore, most reserve Soldiers in the operating force will be unavailable for institutional training for three of every five years.<sup>55</sup> The majority of

professional military education must be completed during the first two years following a deployment, at the same time Soldiers are reintegrating with families and employers. Soldiers in the early years of ARFORGEN will need priority for institutional training opportunities. The system will also need more flexibility in terms of time-in-grade requirements for school and education requirements for promotion. Retention will quickly become an issue if Soldiers are not promoted because they haven't completed a school that they couldn't attend because they were either deployed or preparing for deployment.

The expense and complexity of equipping a Total Force of more than 1.1 million Soldiers requires hard decisions. The Development function of the AOLCM indicates that modernization is required to avoid obsolescence.<sup>56</sup> Deploying units must all have reliable and interoperable equipment and Soldiers must know how to use equipment prior to deployment. However, modernization and interoperability are often at cross-purposes. Due to cost and production capacity, it is infeasible to field new capabilities to the entire force over a very short period of time. However, extended fielding plans create unacceptable interoperability issues within a large operational force. Equipment sets are probably the best approach to resolving this challenge but building equipment sets to support progressive readiness and cyclical deployment of an operational force is only slightly less complex than the original challenge. Added to this challenge are the Homeland Defense (HLD) and Military Support to Civil Authorities (MSCA) responsibilities that also require equipped units.<sup>57</sup>

The dispersion of the reserve force is of limited value in HLD and MSCA if there is no equipment available for rapid employment. Therefore, there must be a baseline of

equipment maintained at or near home station. This equipment should be sufficient to support domestic missions as well as military training during the first three years of ARFORGEN. Baseline equipment can be the least modernized pool of equipment and would be a good candidate for cascaded equipment as newer equipment is placed into other equipment sets. Emphasis for new equipment procurement of baseline equipment should be on equipment identified as dual-use. Dual-use equipment, like radios and trucks, has high value for both domestic support and combat operations. Modular, adaptable equipment sets would be maintained to support New Equipment Training (NET) and higher level collective training in the final year in the Train/Ready force pool. These sets would be specifically designed to support CEF units training to C-METL or DEF units training to specified D-METL. Deployment equipment sets would be pre-positioned overseas and at CONUS bases designated as power projection platforms to reduce force flow times and support post-mobilization training. The equipping implication of an operational reserve force is that the equipment set approach described above should be applied to the Total Force, not just the reserve components.

Addressing the manning, training, and equipping implications is crucial in establishing and maintaining confidence that the operational reserve force will be ready when called. However, the Army and Department of Defense must also have confidence in their ability to access the reserve components when needed. The 2007 mobilization policy revision took a critical step toward assured long-term access to an operational reserve force by removing the 24 month cumulative cap on involuntarily mobilization.<sup>58</sup> But, the ongoing war in Iraq and Afghanistan has delayed the public and political implications of mobilizing and deploying reserve forces in a time of peace.

These implications will begin to emerge as military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan drawdown. Additionally, the concepts associated with mobilization levels and graduated mobilization response do not yet account for the fact that, with an operational reserve force, we will maintain a level of mobilization indefinitely.<sup>59</sup> Successfully addressing these strategic implications will be critical to continued access to the reserve components as an operational reserve force beyond Iraq and Afghanistan.

Resources are identified as an external influence on the AOLCM and there are, indeed, resource considerations associated with every implication identified above. Full-time support (FTS) is just one example. FTS is comprised of those personnel that work full-time for the reserve components to keep the units running between training events. They recruit personnel, track school requirements and enlistment expiration dates, coordinate training resources, maintain equipment and facilities, and manage financial resources. Adequate levels of FTS are needed to keep formations filled, manage incentive programs and institutional training requirements, plan and document training progression, and a myriad of other day-to-day tasks. The requirements for FTS must be validated, by function (unit support, maintenance, etc.), and by ARFORGEN phase, for an operational reserve force. The progressive, cyclic nature of ARFORGEN will likely change how FTS requirements are determined and resourced. Temporary full-time equivalents will be needed to surge support during high tempo times in the cycle while traditional FTS employees provide a baseline level of support across the ARFORGEN cycle.

Resources present two risks to the viability of a sustainable operational reserve force that must be balanced. First, insufficient resources will degrade the effectiveness

of the force. Lack of resourcing underlies many of the enduring manning, training, and equipping concerns about the reserve force. Second, at some point adding resources needed for an operational reserve force causes the reserve force to lose its cost advantage. It is true that when compared Soldier-to-Soldier the Reservist is substantially cheaper than the active Soldier. However, the longer ARFORGEN cycle for reserve units verses active units means the Army must build more units of a given capability if that capability is in the reserve force. For example, if the Army needs to keep one BCT deployed constantly, it would take three active BCTs at a 1:2 BOG-to-dwell ratio to sustain the commitment. However, it would take approximately six reserve BCTs at a 1:4 Mob-to-dwell ratio, assuming ten months BOG from each mobilization. This capability based view of force cost illustrates why the operational reserve force could lose its cost advantage if too many resources are applied to the effort.

### Conclusion

Much concern has been expressed about the operational feasibility and the strategic acceptability of changing the role of the Army's reserve components. This concern fails to consider the operational role of reserve forces in American history and the role agility they have displayed during the Army's evolution. As stated earlier, the Army's reserve components are already in an operational role, by design and by necessity. The "transition" underway in the Army is really a transition to a sustainable operational reserve force. Achieving sustainability requires that the Army address manning, training, equipping and utilization implications of progressive readiness, increased pre-mobilization training tempo, repeated deployments, and Cold War era mobilization concepts, while maintaining the reserve force's cost advantage. The Available force pool within an affordable, sustainable, operational reserve force provides

operational forces when needed while the Train/Ready and Available force pools provide reserve forces needed for strategic depth and surge capacity that are better manned, trained, and equipped, and easier to access, than the strategic reserve of the twentieth century.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, *Transforming the National Guard and Reserves into a 21st Century Operational Force: Report to Congress and the Secretary of Defense* (Washington, DC: Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, January 2008), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Rostker, *I Want You! The Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force*, (RAND Monograph MG-265-RC, 2006), 2.

<sup>3</sup> James S. Lay, Jr., *NSC-68: A Report to the National Security Council*, (Washington, DC: National Security Council Executive Secretary, April 14, 1950).

<sup>4</sup> The Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, *Transforming the National Guard and Reserves into a 21st Century Operational Force: Report to Congress and the Secretary of Defense* (Washington, DC: Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, January 2008), 9.

<sup>5</sup> James Jay Carafano, "Total Force Policy and the Abrams Doctrine: Unfulfilled Promise, Uncertain Future," Foreign Policy Research Institute (February 3, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Colin S. Gray, *Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy, Can the American Way of War Adapt?* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, March 2006), 44.

<sup>8</sup> Stephen J. Mariano, *Peacekeepers Attend the Never Again School*, Master's Thesis (Monterey, CA: U.S. Navy Postgraduate School, December 1995), 17.

<sup>9</sup> James Jay Carafano, "Total Force Policy and the Abrams Doctrine: Unfulfilled Promise, Uncertain Future," Foreign Policy Research Institute (February 3, 2005).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Pete Geren and George W. Casey, Jr., *A Statement on the Posture of the United States Army, Fiscal Year 2009*, Posture Statement presented to the 111th Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, May 2009), 3.

<sup>12</sup> The Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, *Transforming the National Guard and Reserves into a 21st Century Operational Force: Report to Congress and the Secretary of Defense* (Washington, DC: Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, January 2008), 7.



<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>16</sup> Defense Manpower Data Center Contingency Tracking System Daily Processing Files, <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil> (accessed February 16, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Program Guidance Memorandum for Fiscal Years 2010-2015* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, 30 January 2008), 7.

<sup>18</sup> Boots On Ground (BOG) refers to the time spent in a deployed, operational status. The Department of Defense 1:2 BOG-to-dwell goal for 2011 represents two years between one-year deployments.

<sup>19</sup> George W. Casey, Jr., "The Army of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *Army*, October 2009, 32.

<sup>20</sup> Bernard Rostker, *I Want You! The Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force*, (RAND Monograph MG-265-RC,2006), iii.

<sup>21</sup> An active component service member costs approximately four times as much as a reserve component service member. The Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, *Transforming the National Guard and Reserves into a 21st Century Operational Force: Report to Congress and the Secretary of Defense* (Washington, DC: Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, January 2008), 13.

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Managing the Reserve Components as an Operational Force*, Department of Defense Directive 1200.17, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, October 29, 2008), 2.

<sup>23</sup> The Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, *Transforming the National Guard and Reserves into a 21st Century Operational Force: Report to Congress and the Secretary of Defense* (Washington, DC: Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, January 2008), 15.

<sup>24</sup> Bernard Rostker, *I Want You! The Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force*, (RAND Monograph MG-265-RC,2006), 5.

<sup>25</sup> Pete Geren and George W. Casey, Jr., *A Statement on the Posture of the United States Army, Fiscal Year 2009*, Posture Statement presented to the 111th Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, May 2009), 2.

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, February 2010), vii.

<sup>27</sup> The Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, *Transforming the National Guard and Reserves into a 21st Century Operational Force: Report to Congress and the Secretary of Defense* (Washington, DC: Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, January 2008), 11.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Managing the Reserve Components as an Operational Force*, Department of Defense Directive 1200.17, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, October 29, 2008), 1.

<sup>30</sup> James S. Lay, Jr., *NSC-68: A Report to the National Security Council*, (Washington, DC: National Security Council Executive Secretary, April 14, 1950).

<sup>31</sup> Pete Geren and George W. Casey, Jr., "Transforming the Reserve Components to an Operational Force," *Addendum A to A Statement on the Posture of the United States Army, Fiscal Year 2009*, Posture Statement presented to the 111th Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, May 2009).

<sup>32</sup> Charles C. Campbell, "ARFORGEN: Maturing the Model, Refining the Process," *Army*, June 2009, 50.

<sup>33</sup> Future challenges risk is defined as the Department's capacity to execute future missions successfully, and to hedge against shocks. It relates to the Department's ability to field superior capabilities and sufficient capacity to deter/defeat emerging threats in the midterm and long term. U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, February 2010), 90.

<sup>34</sup> Operational risk is defined as the ability of the current force to execute strategy successfully within acceptable human, materiel, financial, and strategic costs. It relates to the Department's ability to execute current, planned, and contingency operations in the near term. U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, February 2010), 90.

<sup>35</sup> Charles C. Campbell, "ARFORGEN: Maturing the Model, Refining the Process," *Army*, June 2009, 50.

<sup>36</sup> U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, "Utilization of the Total Force," memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Under Secretaries of Defense, Washington, DC, January 19, 2007.

<sup>37</sup> Charles C. Campbell, "ARFORGEN: Maturing the Model, Refining the Process," *Army*, June 2009, 50.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>41</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Transition the RC into an Operational Force*, Annex I of the Army Campaign Plan, FRAGO 1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, June 26, 2009).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *How The Army Runs: A Senior Leader Reference Handbook 2009-2010* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2009), Carlisle, PA, 7.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> J. Michael Gilmore, "Congressional Budget Office testimony before the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves," May 16, 2007, linked from the Congressional Budget Office Home Page at "CBO Testimony," <http://www.cbo.gov/doc.cfm?index=8111&type=0> (accessed February 22, 2010).

<sup>48</sup> Pete Geren and George W. Casey, Jr., *A Statement on the Posture of the United States Army, Fiscal Year 2009*, Posture Statement presented to the 111th Congress (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, May 2009), 7.

<sup>49</sup> 10 U.S.C, Section 671 states that "A member of the of the armed forces may not be assigned to active duty on land outside the United States and its territories and possessions until the member has completed the basic training requirements of the armed force of which he is a member."

<sup>50</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Transition the RC into an Operational Force*, Annex I of the Army Campaign Plan, FRAGO 1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, June 26, 2009), I-1-7.

<sup>51</sup> Charles C. Campbell, "ARFORGEN: Maturing the Model, Refining the Process," *Army*, June 2009, 51.

<sup>52</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Transition the RC into an Operational Force*, Annex I of the Army Campaign Plan, FRAGO 1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, June 26, 2009), I-1-6.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Transition the RC into an Operational Force*, Annex I of the Army Campaign Plan, FRAGO 1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, June 26, 2009), I-1-6.

<sup>55</sup> This assumes the current 1:4 BOG-to-dwell goal. Even when the long-term goal of 1:5 is achieved, reserve Soldiers will be unavailable for institutional training for 3 of every 6 years.

<sup>56</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *How The Army Runs: A Senior Leader Reference Handbook 2009-2010* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2009), Carlisle, PA, 7.

<sup>57</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Managing the Reserve Components as an Operational Force*, Department of Defense Directive 1200.17, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, October 29, 2008), 1.

<sup>58</sup> U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, "Utilization of the Total Force," memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Under Secretaries of Defense, Washington, DC, January 19, 2007.

<sup>59</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Mobilization Planning*, Joint Publication 4-05 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, January 11, 2006), I-4.